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What is claimed is:

A method of printing a value bearing indicium (VBI), the method comprising the steps of:

generating a message digest by hashing relevant information;

generating a digital signature from the message digest;

generating a textual representation of the digital signature; and

generating a 2-D bar code comprising the relevant information.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the VBI is a ticket.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the VBI is a coupon.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the VBI is a traveler's check.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the VBI is currency.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein:

the representation of the digital signature further includes a right side;

the 2-D bar code further includes a left side; and

the representation of the digital signature right side is adjacent to the 2-D bar code left side.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein:

the representation of the digital signature further includes a top side;

the bar code further includes a bottom side; and

the representation of the digital signature top side is adjacent to the 2-D bar code bottom side.

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8. The method of claim 1, wherein:
the representation of the digital signature further includes a bottom side;
5 the bar code further includes a top side; and
the representation of the digital signature bottom side is adjacent to the 2-D bar code top side.
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9. The method of claim 1, wherein:
the representation of the digital signature further includes a right side;
the bar code further includes a left side; and
the representation of the digital signature right side is adjacent to the 2-D bar code left side.
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10. The method of claim 1, wherein the VBI is postage for a mail piece.
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11. The method of claim 10, the relevant information including one or more of an indicium version number, an algorithm identifier, a certificate serial number, a postage security device manufacturer identifier, a postage security device model identifier, a postage security device serial number, an ascending register value, a postage amount, a date of mailing, a licensing postal code, a software identifier, a descending register value, and a rate category.
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12. A data processing system adapted to print a VBI, the data processing system comprising:
30 one or more processors; and
one or more memories operably coupled to the processors and having program instructions stored therein, the processors being operable to execute the program instructions, the program instructions including:

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generating a message digest by hashing relevant information;

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generating a digital signature from the message digest;

generating a text representation of the digital signature; and

generating a 2-D bar code comprising the relevant information.

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13. The data processing system of claim 12, wherein:

the representation of the digital signature further includes a right side;

the 2-D bar code further includes a left side; and

the representation of the digital signature right side is adjacent to the 2-D bar code left side.

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14. The data processing system of claim 12, wherein:

the representation of the digital signature further includes a top side;

the bar code further includes a bottom side; and

the representation of the digital signature top side is adjacent to the 2-D bar code bottom side.

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15. The data processing system of claim 12, wherein:

the representation of the digital signature further includes a bottom side;

the bar code further includes a top side; and

the representation of the digital signature bottom side is adjacent to the 2-D bar code top side.

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16. The data processing system of claim 12, wherein:

the representation of the digital signature further includes a left side;

the 2-D bar code further includes a left right; and

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- 1 the representation of the digital signature left side
is adjacent to the 2-D bar code right side.
- 5 17. The data processing system of claim 12 wherein the data
processing system is a closed metering system.
18. The data processing system of claim 12 wherein the data
processing system is an open metering system.
- 10 19. A data processing system adapted to print a VBI, the data
processing system comprising:
 a processor; and
 a memory operably coupled to the processor and having
program instructions stored therein, the processor being
operable to execute the program instructions, the program
instructions including:
 generating a message digest by hashing relevant
information;
 generating a digital signature from the message
digest;
 generating a text representation of the digital
signature; and
 generating a 2-D bar code comprising the relevant
information.
- 25 20. The data processing system of claim 19, wherein:
 the representation of the digital signature further
includes a right side;
 the 2-D bar code further includes a left side; and
 the representation of the digital signature right side
is adjacent to the 2-D bar code left side.
- 30 21. The data processing system of claim 19, wherein:
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the representation of the digital signature further includes a top side;

the 2-D bar code further includes a bottom side; and

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the representation of the digital signature top side is adjacent to the 2-D bar code bottom side.

22. The data processing system of claim 19, wherein:

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the representation of the digital signature further includes a left side;

the 2-D bar code further includes a right side; and

the representation of the digital signature left side is adjacent to the 2-D bar code right side.

23. The data processing system of claim 19, wherein:

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the representation of the digital signature further includes a bottom side;

the 2-D bar code further includes a top side; and

the representation of the digital signature bottom side is adjacent to the 2-D bar code top side.

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24. The data processing system of claim 19, wherein the VBI is postage for a mail piece.

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25. The data processing system of claim 19, wherein the VBI is a ticket.

26. The data processing system of claim 19, wherein the VBI is a coupon.

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27. The data processing system of claim 19, wherein the VBI is a traveler's check.

28. The data processing system of claim 19, wherein the VBI is currency.

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29. The data processing system of claim 19, wherein the VBI is postage for a mail piece.

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30. A computer-readable storage medium embodying computer program instructions for execution by a computer, the computer program instructions adapting a computer to provide a value bearing indicium to a user via a computer network, the computer program instructions comprising:

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generating a message digest by hashing relevant information;

generating a digital signature from the message digest;

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generating a text representation of the digital signature; and

generating a 2-D bar code comprising the relevant information.

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31. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 30, wherein:
the representation of the digital signature further includes a right side;

the 2-D bar code further includes a left side; and

the digital signature right side is adjacent to the 2-D bar code left side.

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32. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 30, wherein:
the representation of the digital signature further includes a top side;

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the 2-D bar code further includes a bottom side; and

the representation of the digital signature top side is adjacent to the 2-D bar code bottom side.

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33. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 30, wherein:

1 the representation of the digital signature further includes a left side;

the 2-D bar code further includes a right side; and

5 the representation of the digital signature left side is adjacent to the 2-D bar code right side.

34. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 30, wherein:
the representation of the digital signature further includes a bottom side;

10 the 2-D bar code further includes a top side; and

the representation of the digital signature bottom side is adjacent to the 2-D bar code top side.

15 35. A VBI comprising:

a 2-D barcode including relevant information; and

a text representation of a digital signature generated from a message digest, the message digest generated using a secure hash algorithm to hash the relevant information.

20 36. The VBI of claim 35, wherein:

the VBI is postage for a mail piece; and

the relevant information is mailing information.

25 37. The VBI of claim 36, the mailing information including one or more of an indicium version number, an algorithm identifier, a certificate serial number, a postage security device manufacturer identifier, a postage security device model identifier, a postage security device serial number,
30 an ascending register value, a postage amount, a date of mailing, a licensing postal code, a software identifier, a descending register value, and a rate category.